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Chile: Anniversary Speech

President Pinochet, reflecting a familiar determination, announced on 11 September that the state of siege and nightly curfew in effect since 1973 will continue for the time being. He also indicated that these measures might eventually be relaxed or lifted "if the signs of progressive normality which can be observed continue."

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Prior to his departure for Washington, Pinochet and the other members of the junta apparently agreed that the state of siege would be lifted on 11 December.

The overall tone of Pinochet's address on the fourth anniversary of the overthrow of the Allende regime was mildly upbeat, as he cited some economic gains and political initiatives. Pinochet said Chile will not modify the route it has mapped out in order to gain the "good graces" of certain countries. He did acknowledge a slow improvement in the attitude of the US toward "Chilean reality."

After Pinochet's announcement in July of a phased return to limited popular elections by 1985, administration spokesmen apparently had some second thoughts about a timetable; they subsequently emphasized they intended to keep the process tightly in hand and criticized "impatient" Chileans. Thus, although Pinochet's announcement is no real surprise, it will disappoint the many observers who had hoped he would follow up on pledges of a return to constitutional rule by easing restrictions.

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